



Colorado Book Club Resource

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR NINE STORIES BY J. D. SALINGER

1. Compare the characters of Seymour Glass and Teddy McArdle. How do their sudden deaths help tell the stories in which they appear?
2. The stories in the collection all take place and originally appeared in the late 1940s and early 1950s. What changes in American society were taking place at this time that are reflected in Salinger's stories?
3. Salinger does not use the names of the characters in "Pretty Mouth and Green My Eyes" except incidentally in the dialog. Lee is referred to as "the gray-haired man" and Joanie only as "the girl." Why do you think Salinger does this, and how does it affect your interpretation of the events in the story?
4. How does Salinger portray marital happiness and strain in his stories? Is he optimistic or pessimistic about love?
5. How does the character of Ginnie develop over the relatively short period of time covered in "Just Before the War with the Eskimos"?
6. The nine stories in the collection were originally written and published at different times. Does the order in which they appear in the book have any significance?
7. Compare the characters of Seymour Glass and the narrator in "For Esme with Love and Squalor." How are they alike? How are they different?
8. Discuss the role that children play in Salinger's stories. What is his view of childhood?
9. Several of Salinger's stories contain deaths or descriptions of death. How does he address this subject?

Discussion questions adapted from Bookrags.com.



This discussion sheet is property of the Colorado State Library's Book Club Resource. Please return this sheet along with all of the books in the book bag to the Colorado State Library – Courier Code C912. Contact bookclub@coloradovirtuallibrary.org with questions or concerns.